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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No. 395 Rs. 5/-

Mahabharata-34

THE SLAYING OF ABHIMANYU

IBH

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The last session of our rendering of the Mahabharata described the investiture of Drona as commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. Duryodhana asked Drona to use all his might to take Yudhishthira captive during the course of the battle but Drona failed in the task. Provoked by Duryodhana's taunts, Drona took a vow on the thirteenth day of the war that he would kill at least one great warrior during the day's battle.

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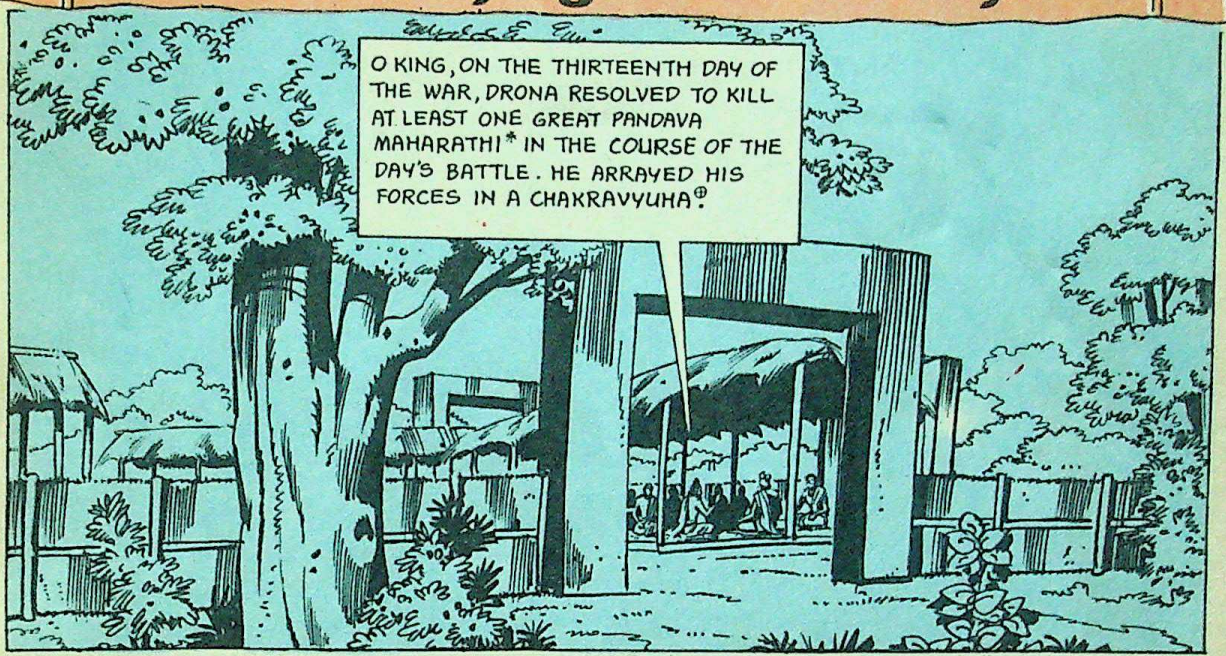
Mahabharata - 34

The Slaying Of Abhimanyu



"JAYADRATHA STOOD FIRM LIKE MOUNT MERU BESIDE DRONA AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHAKRAVYUHA. BEHIND HIM WERE ASHWATTHAMA AND OTHER WARRIORS.

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* THE HIGHEST HONOUR BESTOWED ON A WARRIOR. ⊕ WHEEL FORMATION.

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THERE IS SCARCELY ANYTHING ABOUT WARFARE THAT ARJUNA DOESN'T KNOW. YOU MUST SOMEHOW DISTRACT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

"TO THE FAR SOUTH OF THE BATTLEFIELD AWAY FROM THE CHAKRAVYUHA, THE SAMSHAPTAKAS* HAILED ARJUNA.

ARJUNA! YOU HAVE STILL NOT VANQUISHED US!

THE SAMSHAPTAKAS ARE AGAIN CHALLENGING ME!

"ARJUNA RESPONDED TO THEIR CHALLENGE AGAIN, LEAVING THE PANDAVA ARMY TO STRUGGLE AGAINST DRONA'S DIFFICULT CHAKRA FORMATION. ALL THE GREAT PANDAVA WARRIORS DHRISTRADYUMNA, SHIKHANDI, NAKULA, SAHADEVA...

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* MERCENARIES WHO VOW NOT TO LEAVE THE BATTLEFIELD, WITHOUT WINNING.

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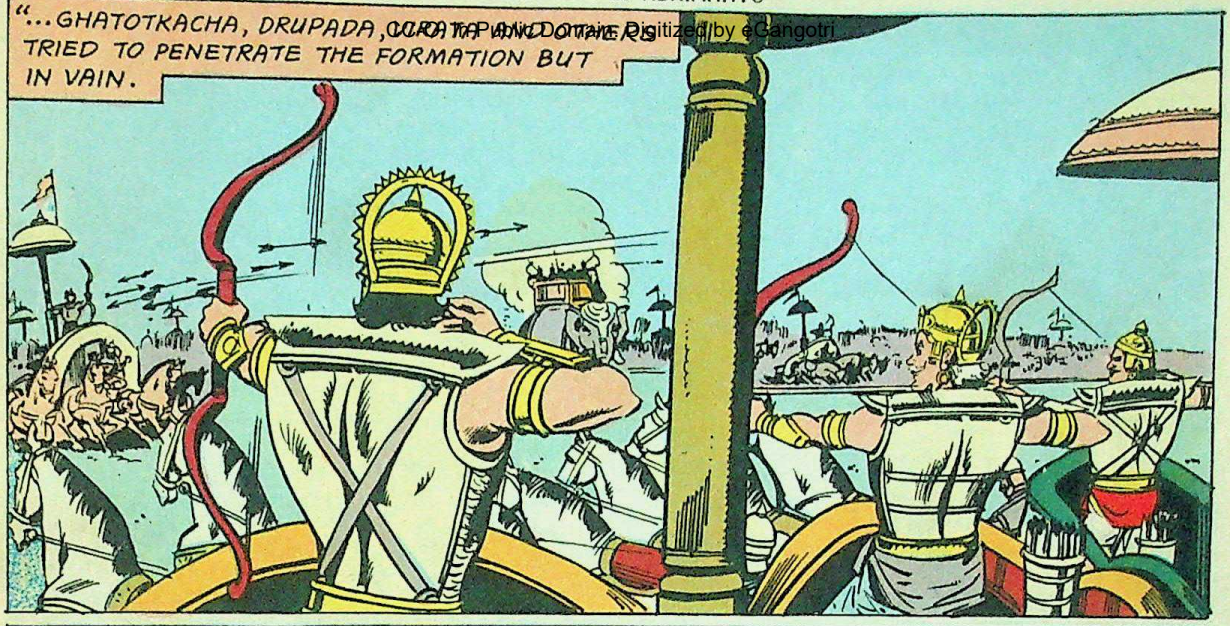

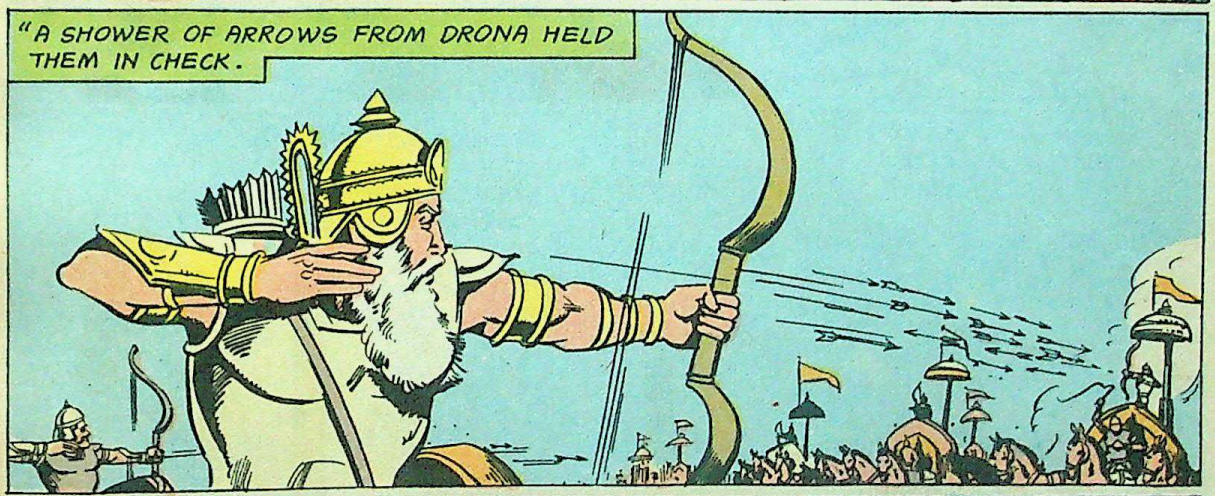

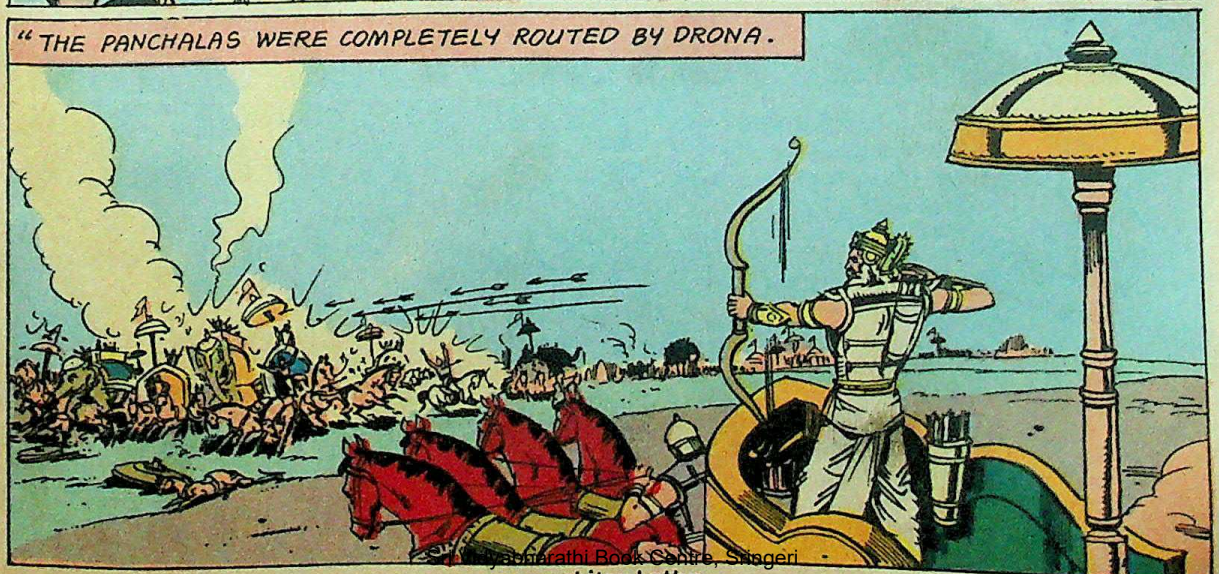

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"YUDHISHTHIRA WAS EXASPERATED.

IS THERE NONE IN OUR ARMY WHO CAN FACE DRONA'S WRATH ?

"HE TURNED TO ABHIMANYU, THE YOUNG SON OF ARJUNA —

DO SOMETHING TO SAVE US THE EMBARRASSMENT WHEN ARJUNA RETURNS FROM FIGHTING THE SAMSHAPTAKAS.

NONE OF US KNOW HOW TO GET ACROSS THIS CHAKRAVYUHA.

BESIDES KRISHNA, ARJUNA AND PRADYUMNA, ONLY YOU KNOW HOW TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

ABHIMANYU, USE YOUR VALOUR AND SKILL AT THIS CRUCIAL HOUR AND DESTROY DRONA'S FORCES!

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"ABHIMANYU REPLIED —

O GREAT KING! FOR THE GLORY OF MY RACE I SHALL CERTAINLY FORCE MY WAY THROUGH THIS FORMIDABLE FORMATION BUT...

...I KNOW ONLY HOW TO PENETRATE THE CHAKRAVYUHA.

IF I AM TRAPPED INSIDE, I WON'T KNOW HOW TO FIND MY WAY OUT.

O ABHIMANYU! MAKE AN INROAD INTO THIS IMPENETRABLE FORMATION. WE WILL ALL FOLLOW YOU INSIDE AND PROTECT YOU THEREAFTER.

"BHEEMA SAID —

SON, I WILL COME WITH YOU. BESIDES DHRISTRADYUMNA, WITH HIS VALIANT PANCHALAS, WILL FOLLOW YOU.

AT EVERY POINT WHERE YOU BREAK THROUGH THE FORMATION, WE WILL KILL THE MIGHTY WARRIORS OF THE KAURAVAS AND CONTINUE TO SHATTER THE CHAKRA.

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"THE VALOROUS ABHIMANYU DECLARED —

SUCH A FEAT WILL I PERFORM TODAY THAT MY PARENTS AND MY UNCLE KRISHNA WILL BE PROUD OF ME.

COME, CHARIOTEER, LEAD ME ON TO DRONA.

"THE CHARIOTEER REPLIED —

THIS IS A TREMENDOUS TASK ASSIGNED TO YOU BY YOUR ELDERS. PAUSE AND PONDER AWHILE BEFORE YOU SET FORTH.

"ABHIMANYU LAUGHED ALOUD.

I CAN VANQUISH DRONA'S FORCES WITH EASE. LET US PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY.

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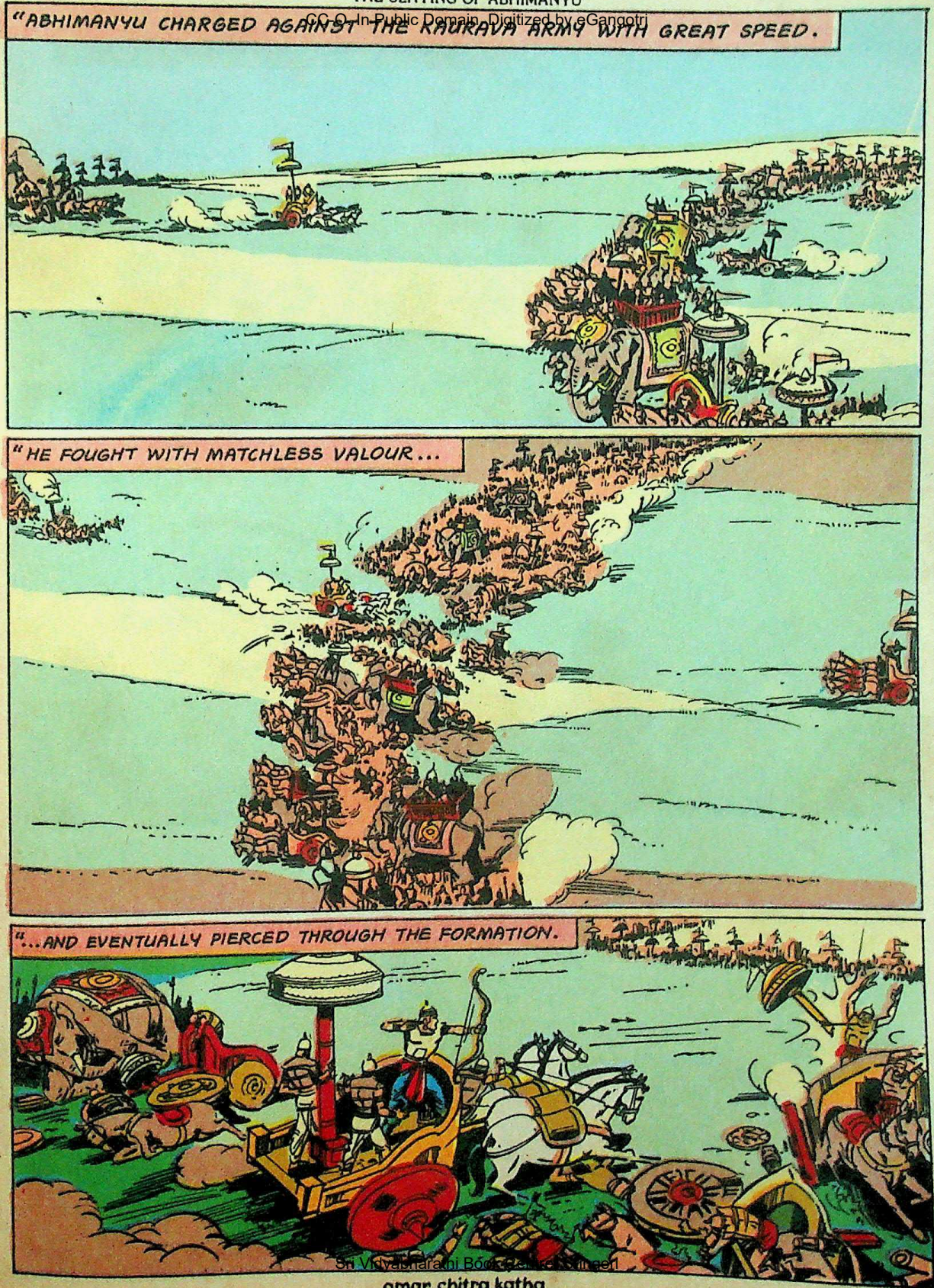

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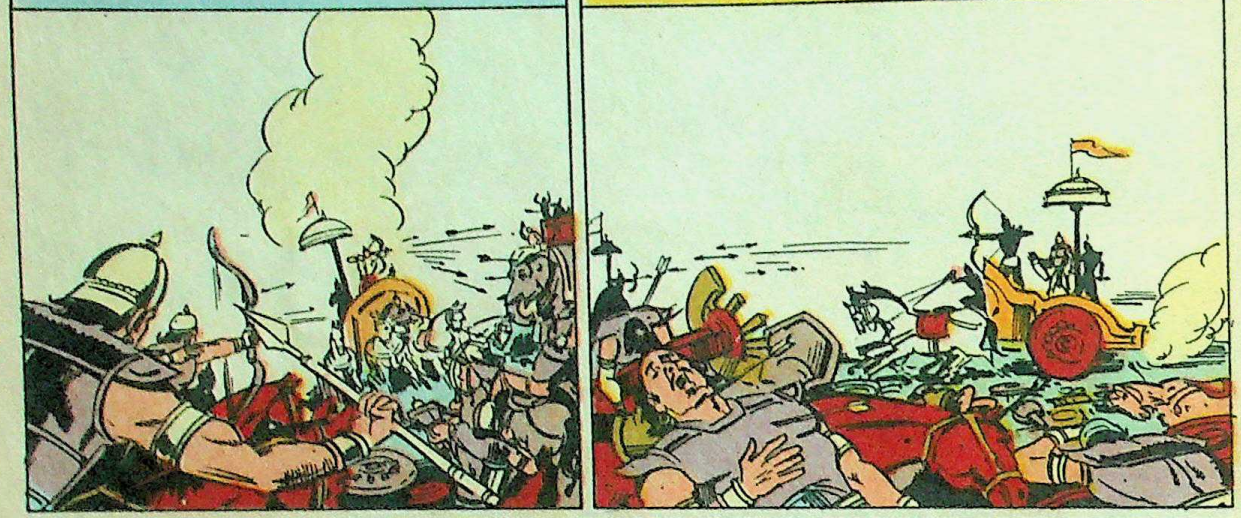
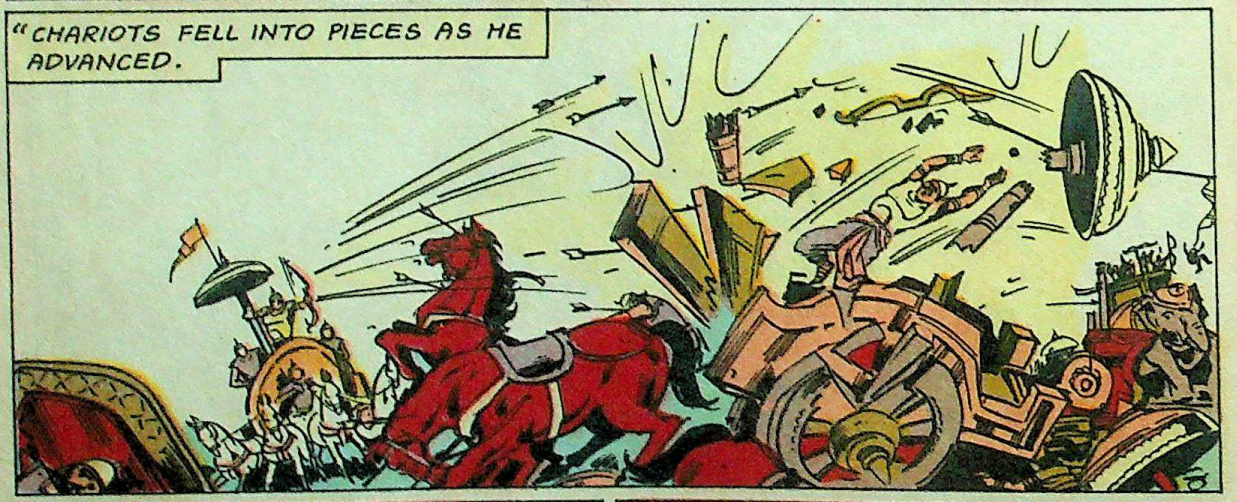
"HOWEVER, WITHIN MOMENTS, THE KAURAVA WARRIORS SURROUNDED HIM.

IT WAS A FEARFUL BATTLE THAT ABHIMANYU FOUGHT SINGLE-HANDEDLY.



"CHARIOTS FELL INTO PIECES AS HE ADVANCED.



"THE FRIGHTENED KAURAVA ARMY SCATTERED PELL-MELL.

"UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ANGER, DURYODHANA CHARGED AHEAD AGAINST ABHIMANYU.

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"DRONA ENTREATED THE FLEEING KAURAVAS —

HALT, O MIGHTY WARRIORS! PROTECT DURYODHANA FOR HIS VERY LIFE IS IN DANGER.

"EXHORTED BY DRONA, SOME OF THE MIGHTY WARRIORS RETURNED TO THE SCENE AND SURROUNDED DURYODHANA TO PROTECT HIM.

"DURING THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT ENSUED, ABHIMANYU SHATTERED KARNA'S ARMOUR.

AAH!

"ONE OF HIS ARROWS MADE SHALYA UNCONSCIOUS.

Sri Vidyabhi... Centre, Srngeri

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"EXCEEDINGLY PLEASED WITH ABHIMANYU'S VALOUR, DRONA SAID TO KRIPA —

THERE IS NONE AS VALIANT IN BATTLE AS YOUNG ABHIMANYU AND YET HE APPEARS TO BE FIGHTING WITH RESTRAIN-

THIS MADE DURYODHANA VERY ANGRY. HE DECLARED —

DRONA IS DELIBERATELY SPARING THE LIFE OF ABHIMANYU, SON OF HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL ARJUNA.

SAFE UNDER DRONA'S PROTECTION, ABHIMANYU IS ACTING BRAVE AND MIGHTY. VANQUISH HIM! KILL HIM!

"DUHSHASANA SAID —

I SWEAR I WILL KILL THIS SON OF ARJUNA!

"AS DUHSHASANA APPROACHED, ABHIMANYU SHATTERED HIS BOW WITH AN ARROW.

"HE THEN SHOT ARROW AFTER DEADLY ARROW WHICH WOUNDED DUHSHASANA AND KNOCKED HIM UNCONSCIOUS.

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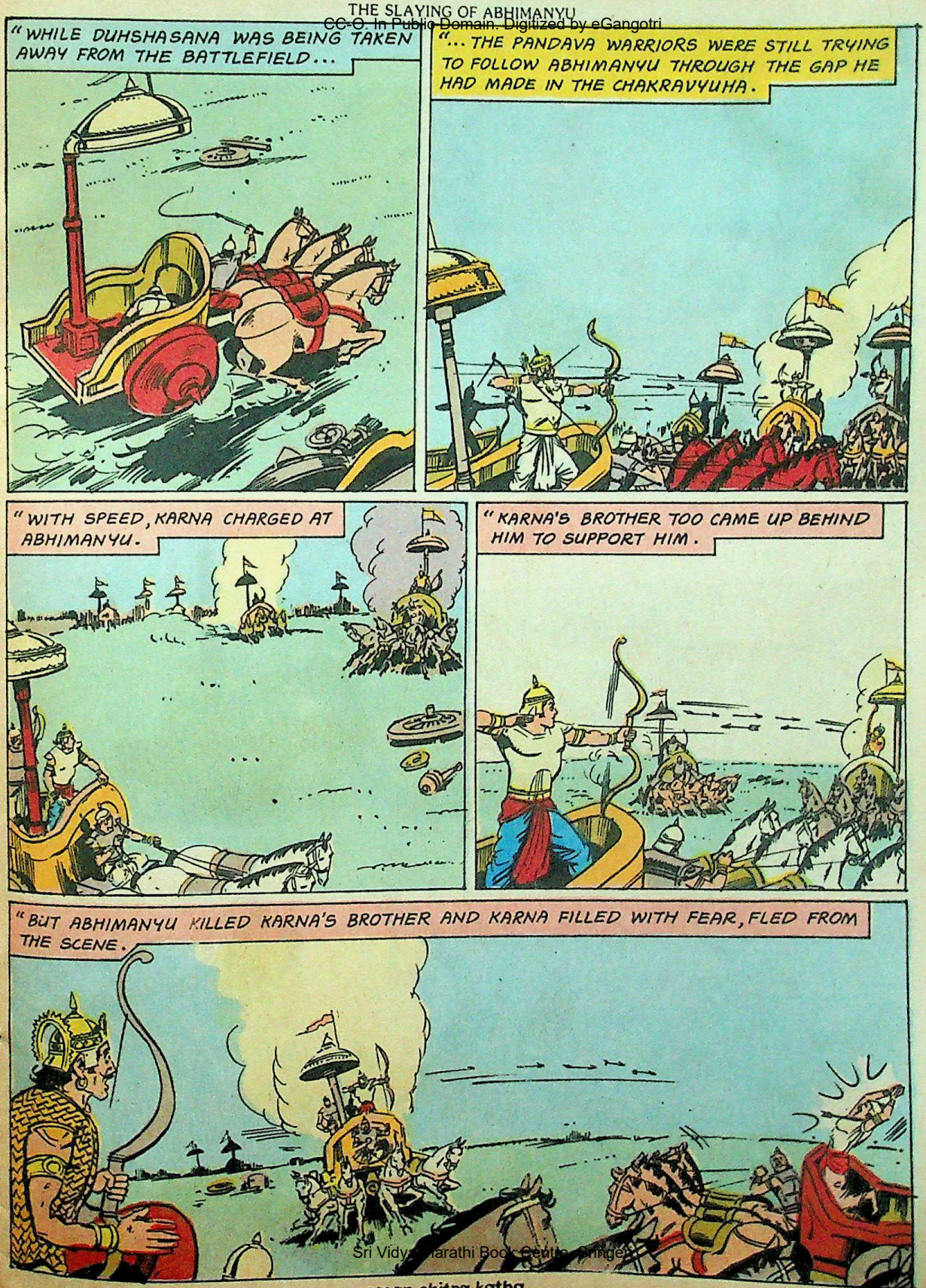

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"ABHIMANYU GREATLY TORMENTED THE KAURAVA ARMY.

"MEANWHILE, THE OTHER PANDAVAS WERE TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE CHAKRAVYUHA IN A BID TO REACH ABHIMANYU.

"SEEING THIS, JAYADRATHA RUSHED TO THE SPOT...

"...AND RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS WHILE BRAVELY WITHSTANDING THEIR ONSLAUGHT.

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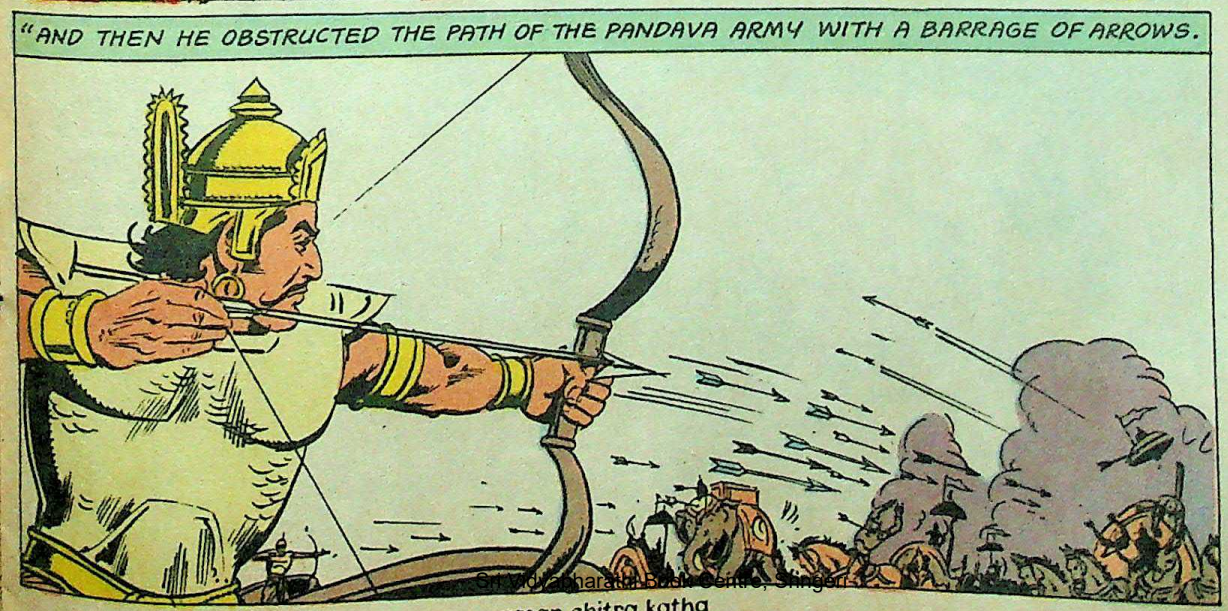

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"THE KAURAVAS HAILED JAYADRATHA'S COURAGEOUS VALOUR AND RUSHED TO HIS SUPPORT.

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BRAVO, JAYADRATHA!

WELL DONE, JAYADRATHA!

SANJAYA, I'M SURPRISED AT THE VALOUR AND STRENGTH OF JAYADRATHA. HOW DID HE ACCOMPLISH THIS REMARKABLE FEAT SINGLE-HANDED?

O KING, WHEN THE PANDAVAS WERE LIVING IN THE FOREST, JAYADRATHA HAD ABDUCTED DRAUPADI. HOWEVER, THE PANDAVAS CHASED HIM, FOUGHT WITH HIM AND FREED DRAUPADI.

"A HUMILIATED JAYADRATHA THEN PERFORMED SEVERE AUSTERITES. SHIVA THEN BLESSED HIM —

FOR A BOON, HE ASKED SHIVA THE POWER TO OPPOSE THE PANDAVAS IN WARFARE. HENCE ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY, HE WAS ABLE TO CONTAIN THEIR ADVANCE.

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"MEANWHILE, ABHIMANYU THOUGH ISOLATED, BATTLED ON BRAVELY INSIDE THE CHAKRA.

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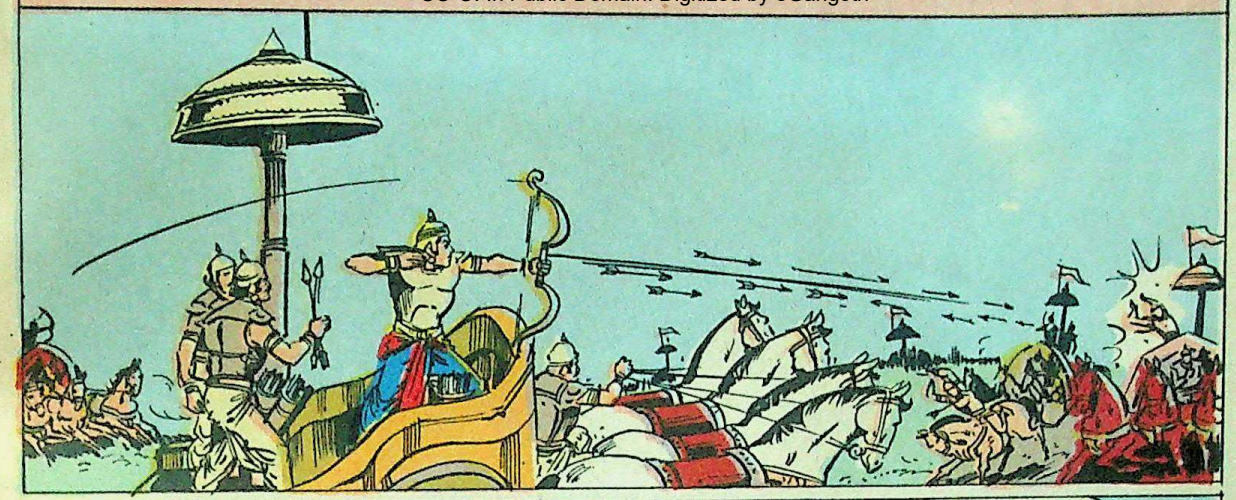
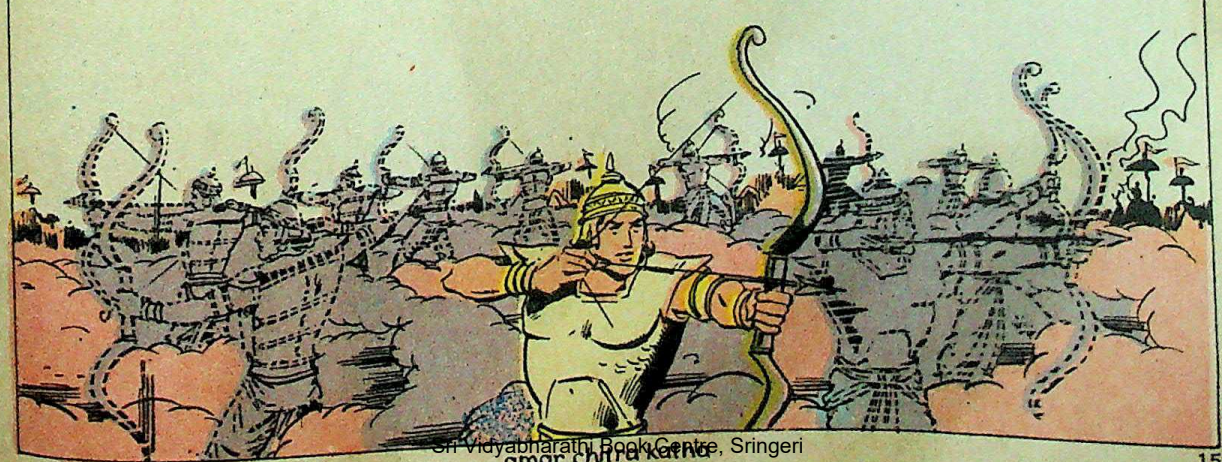


"USING THE WEAPONS THAT ARJUNA HAD OBTAINED FROM THE GANDHARVAS, ABHIMANYU CREATED THE ILLUSION OF THOUSANDS OF ABHIMANYUS AROUND THE KAURAVAS.



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*GOD OF DEATH

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"What's a white shoe cleaner got to do with winning the game?

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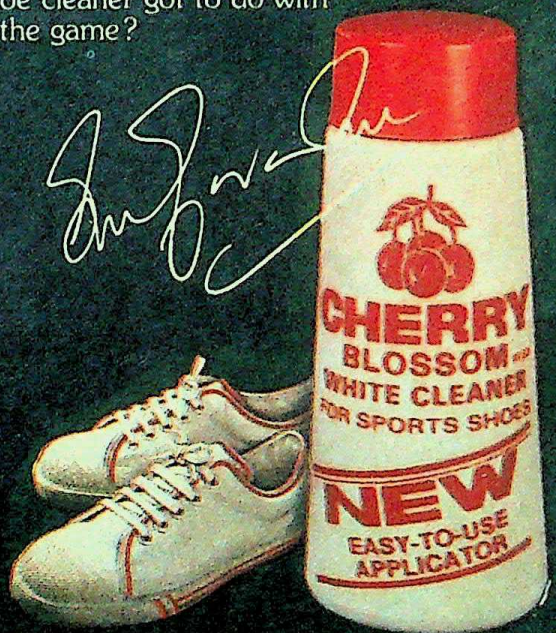
Let me tell you."

"Back in the sixties while playing a crucial college match I figured—when a sportsman goes into the field properly dressed and feeling confident, it's half the battle won!

Sounds far-fetched, does it? But it works for me. You know, no matter how much you practice, prepare, and perfect yourself for the game, if finally you don't come perfectly turned out for it—you just don't feel right.

So, next time you prepare for a game—make sure you're completely ready. Ready in body, game and attire. And ready to win!

Now, you tell me, what's a white shoe cleaner got to do with winning the game?



Be a sportsman... down to your feet!"

CHERRY WHITE CLEANER

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"SEEING ALL THE KAURAVAS TORMENTED BY ABHIMANYU, KARNA ASKED DRONA —

HOW CAN WE KILL ABHIMANYU, O GRANDSIRE?

"DRONA ANSWERED —

HURT AS I AM BY HIS ARROWS, I CANNOT HELP BUT ADMIRE HIS SPEED AND SKILL.

"KARNA SAID —

OH! THE PAIN HE IS CAUSING ME WITH HIS ARROWS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR. BUT FOR THE CALL OF DUTY AS A WARRIOR I WOULD HAVE FLED THE FIELD.

"DRONA LAUGHED ALOUD AND SAID TO KARNA—

IT WAS I WHO TAUGHT HIS FATHER, ARJUNA, TO DON THE ARMOUR IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ARROW CAN PIERCE IT. ABHIMANYU HAS OBVIOUSLY LEARNT THE ART FROM HIS FATHER.

HIS ARMOUR IS IMPENETRABLE. TRY, IF YOU CAN, TO CUT HIS BOW STRING FROM BEHIND, AND DESTROY HIS CHARIOT.

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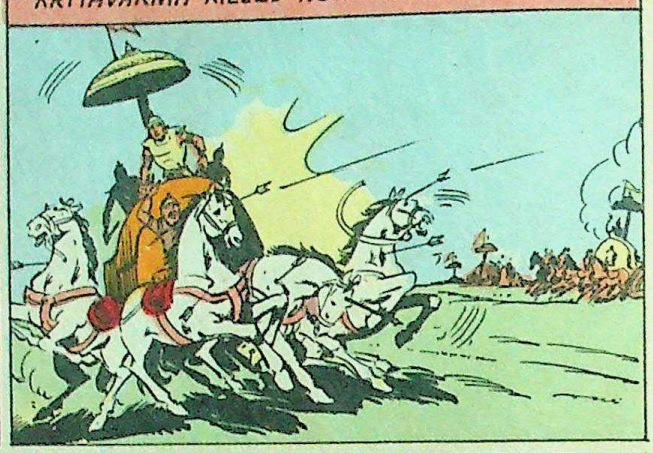
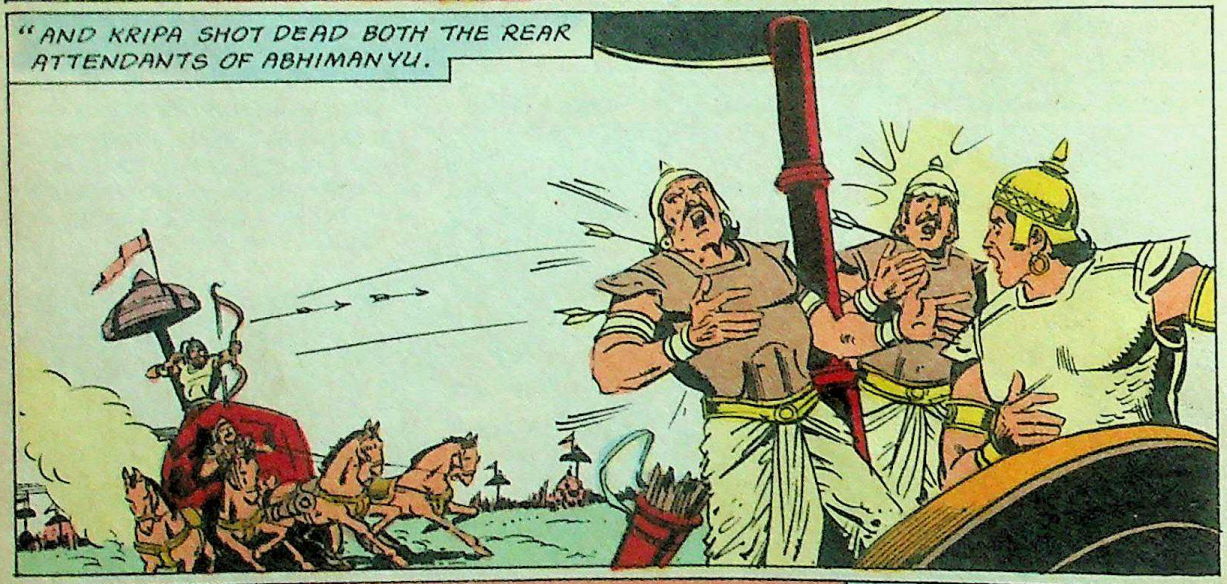
"EAGERLY FOLLOWING DRONA'S ADVICE, KARNA SHOT ABHIMANYU'S BOW TO PIECES.

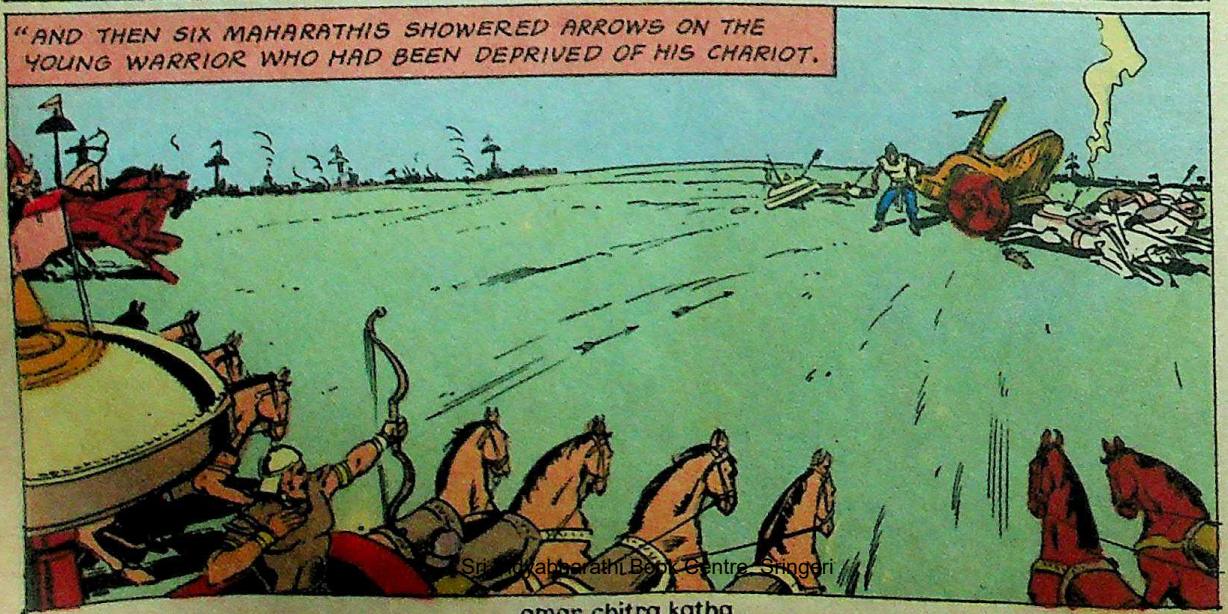
"KRITAVARMA KILLED ABHIMANYU'S HORSES.



"AND KRIPA SHOT DEAD BOTH THE REAR ATTENDANTS OF ABHIMANYU.



"AND THEN SIX MAHARATHIS SHOWERED ARROWS ON THE YOUNG WARRIOR WHO HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS CHARIOT.



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"UNDAUNTED, ABHIMANYU PICKED UP A SWORD AND SHIELD AND JUMPED INTO THE FRAY.

DRONA CUT THE SWORD AT THE HILT WITH SHARP ARROWS.

"ABHIMANYU'S SHIELD WAS SHATTERED BY KARNA.

"THE YOUNG WARRIOR THEN PICKED UP A WHEEL OF HIS CART AND RUSHED AT DRONA.

"BUT THE KAURAVA WARRIORS BROKE THE WHEEL INTO PIECES.

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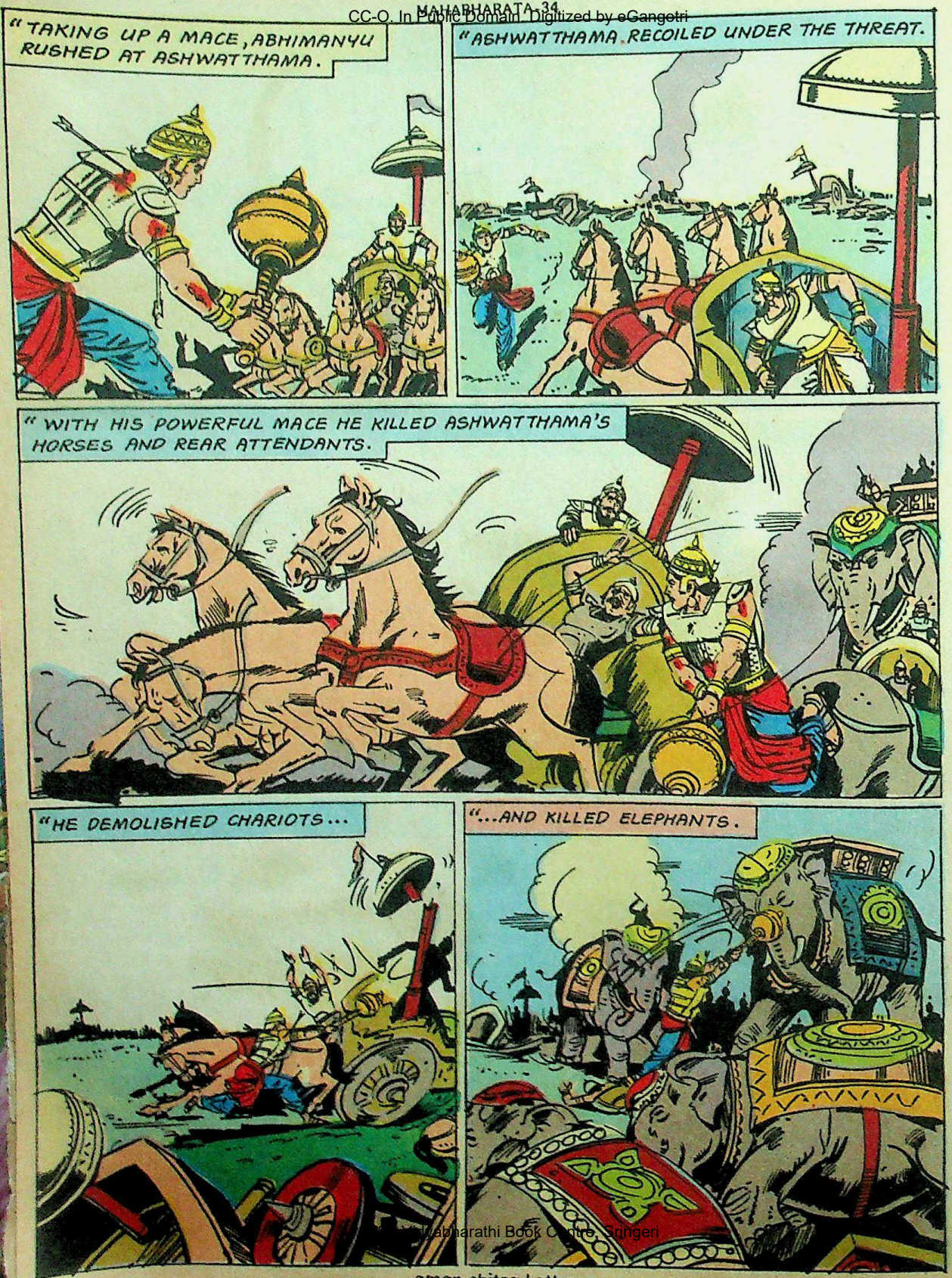

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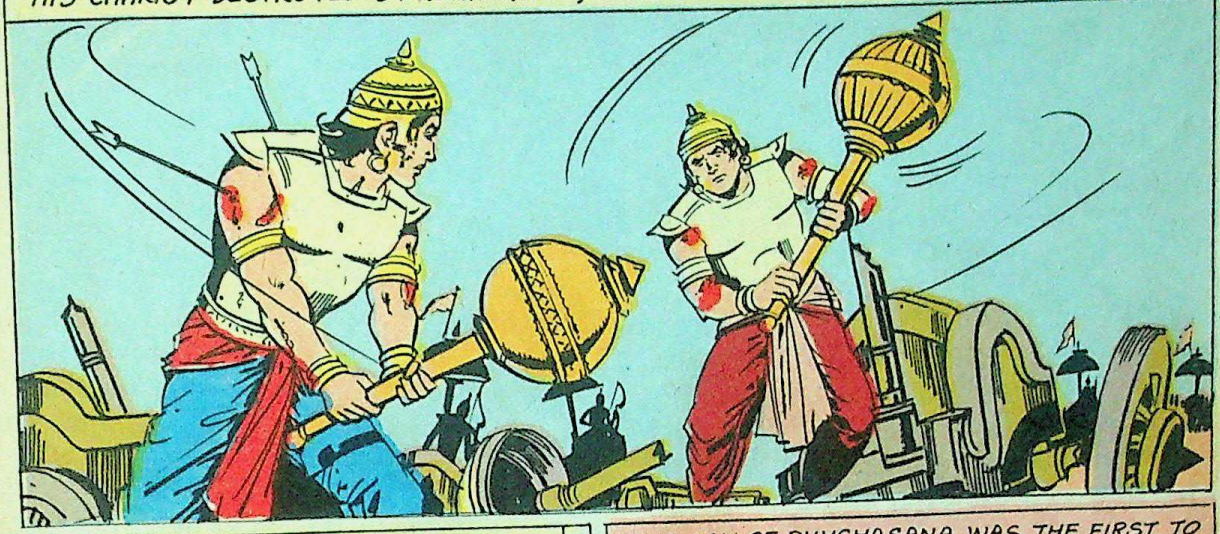
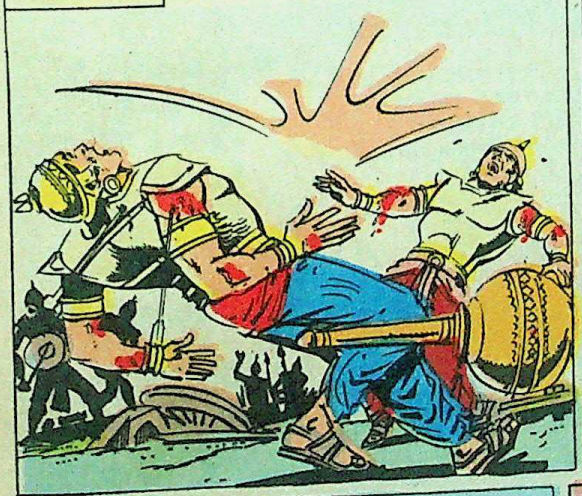
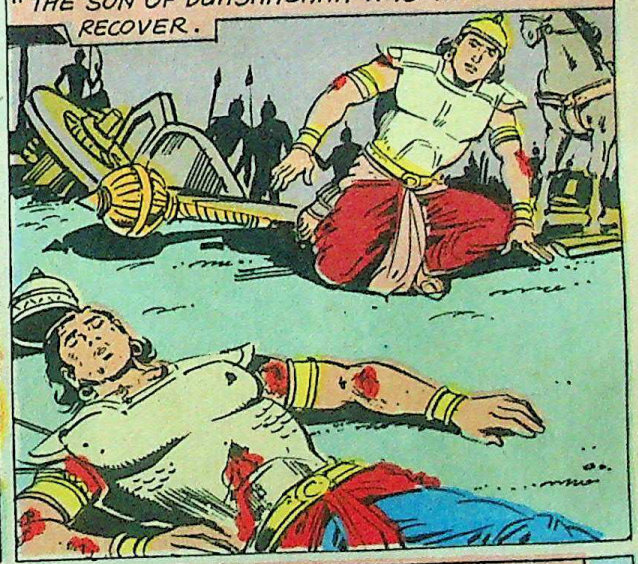
"HIS CHARIOT DESTROYED BY ABHIMANYU, DUHSHASANA'S SON ALSO TOOK UP A MACE.



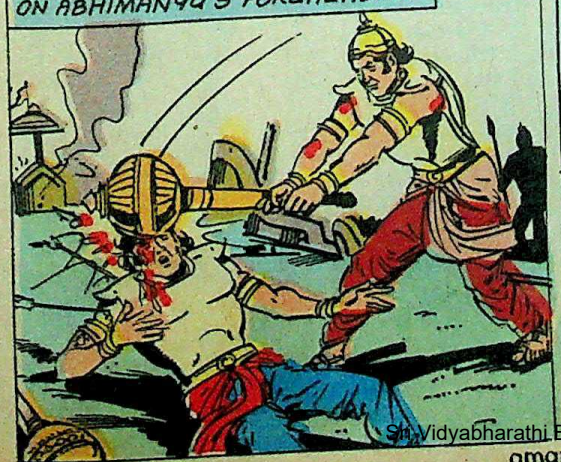
"HURT BY EACH OTHER'S BLOWS, BOTH COLLAPSED SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE GROUND.



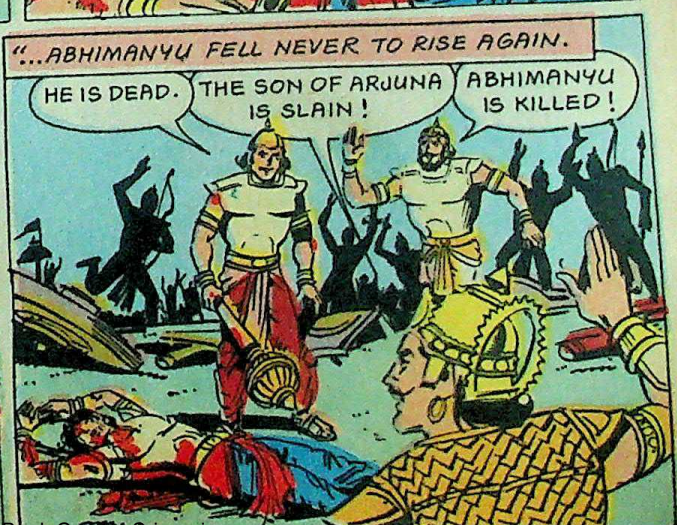
"THE SON OF DUHSHASANA WAS THE FIRST TO RECOVER.



"HE GOT UP AND STRUCK A HEAVY BLOW ON ABHIMANYU'S FOREHEAD...



"...ABHIMANYU FELL NEVER TO RISE AGAIN.



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"THE SOLDIERS OF THE PANDAVA ARMY WERE TERRIFIED TO HEAR THE NEWS. THEY BEGAN TO FLEE THE BATTLEFIELD.

RUN!

ABHIMANYU IS DEAD!

ABHIMANYU KILLED!

RUN!

YUDHISHTHIRA TRIED TO STOP HIS MEN FROM RUNNING AWAY.

COME BACK! ABHIMANYU HAS SURELY ATTAINED HEAVEN BY THE VALOUR SHOWN ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HAVE PATIENCE, WE WILL OVERCOME THE ENEMIES.

"BUT THE DEMORALISED PANDAVA ARMY RETURNED TO THE CAMP IN DEEP SORROW.

"INCONSOLABLE, YUDHISHTHIRA LAMENTED.

ALAS! KRISHNA'S BELOVED NEPHEW, THE VALIANT ABHIMANYU, IS DEAD.

HOW WILL I FACE ARJUNA NOW? HOW WILL I FACE THE BEREAVED MOTHER SUBHADRA?

HOW WILL WE RELATE THIS TRAGEDY TO KRISHNA AND ARJUNA?

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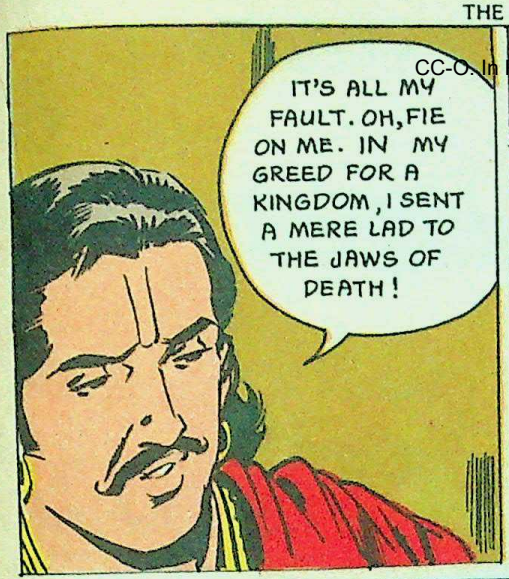

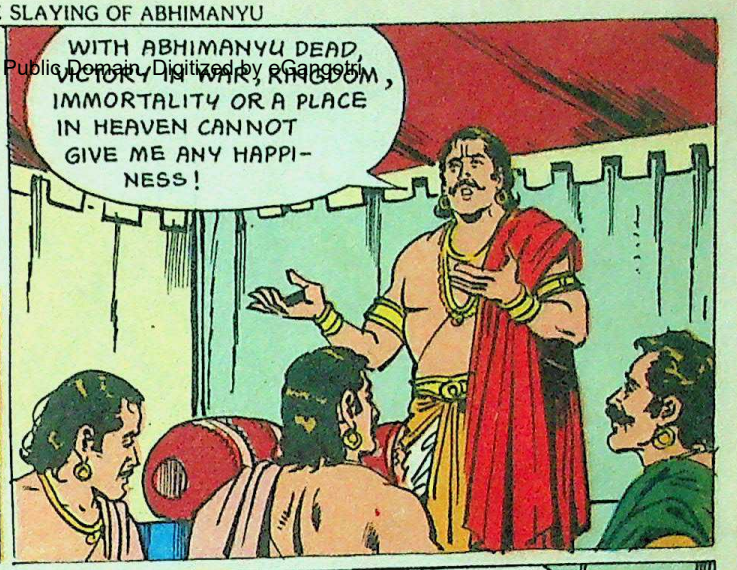

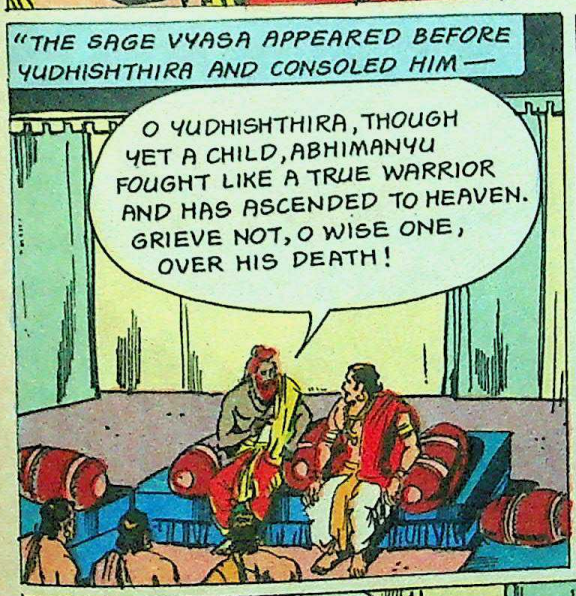

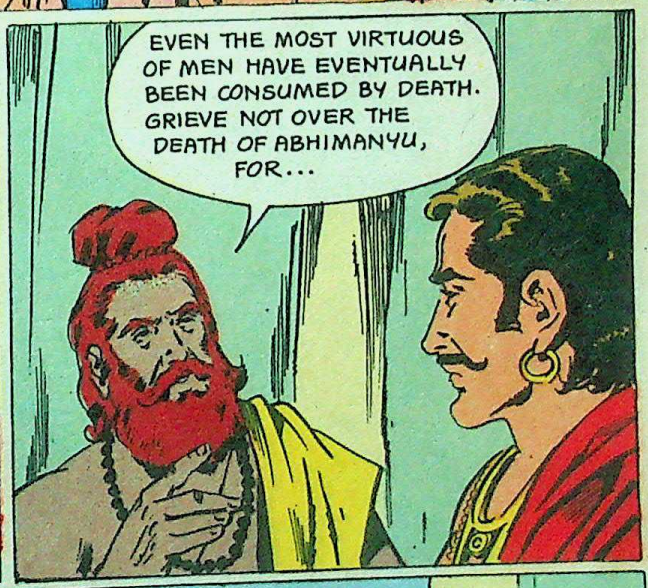

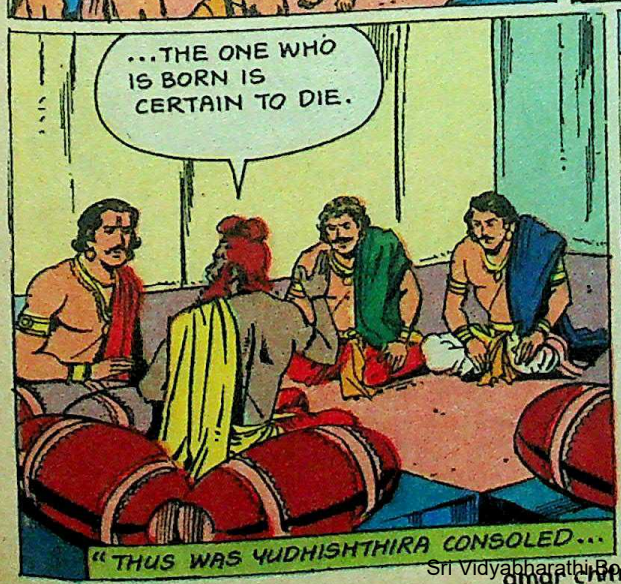

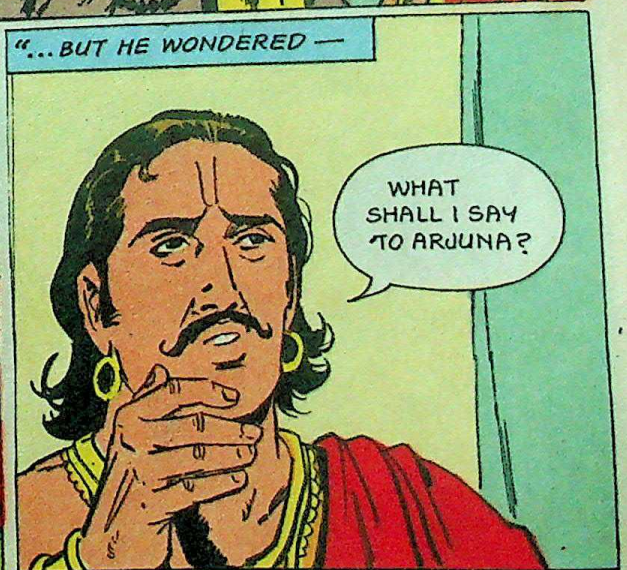

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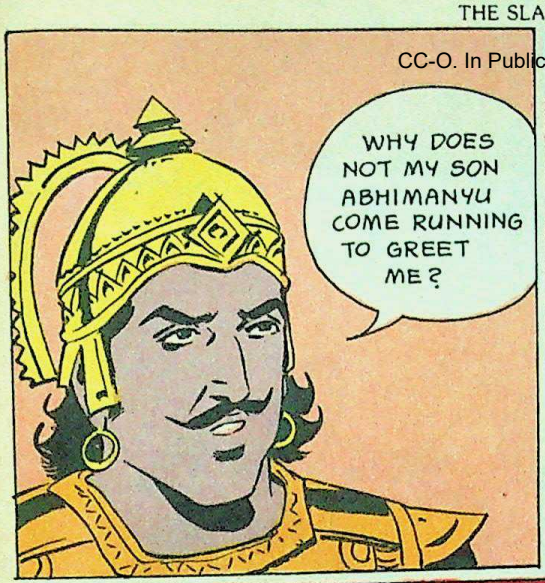

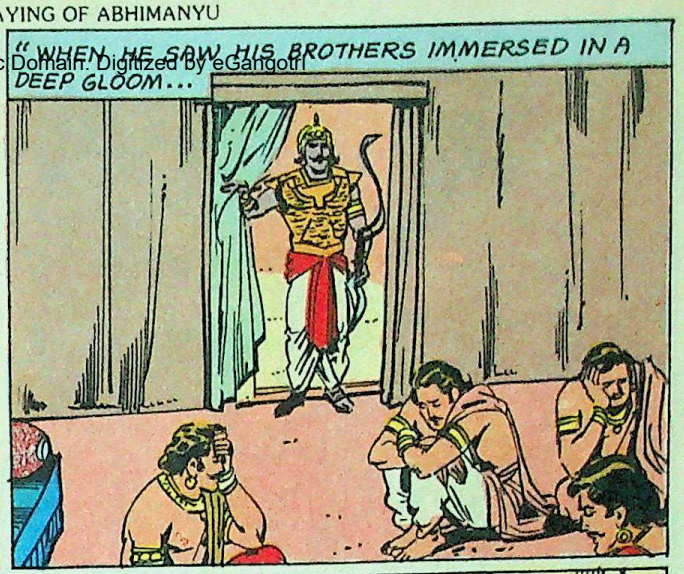

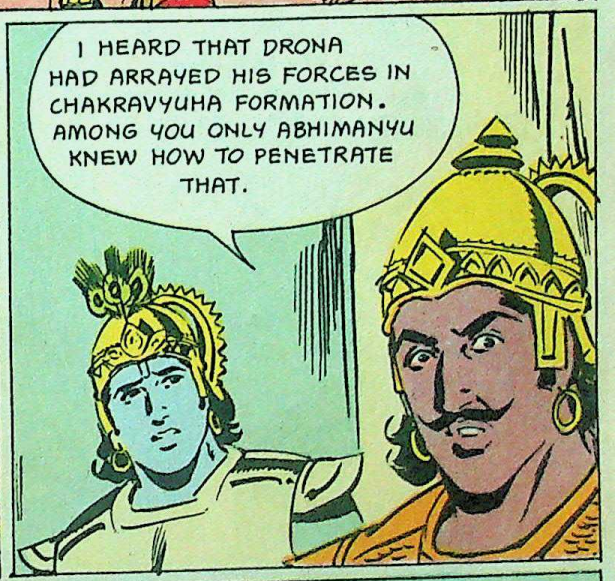

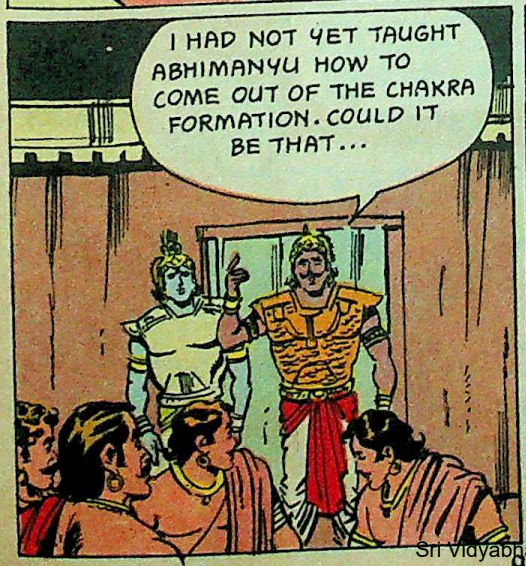

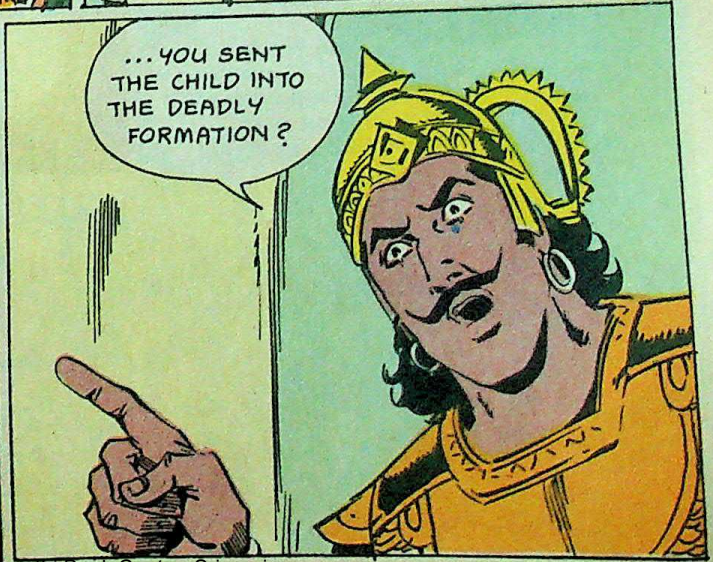

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"...FINALLY YUDHISHTHIRA WHOSE HEART BRIMMED WITH LOVE AND RESPECT FOR ARJUNA, SPOKE —

O ARJUNA, TORMENTED BY DRONA, WHO WANTED TO TAKE ME CAPTIVE, WE REQUESTED ABHIMANYU TO BREAK THROUGH THE CHARAVYUHA. THAT COURAGEOUS HERO AGREED.

"AND YUDHISHTHIRA NARRATED HOW JAYADRATHA, WITH THE ASSURANCE OF THE BOON GIVEN BY SHIVA, RESTRAINED THE PANDAVAS FROM GOING TO THE HELP OF ABHIMANYU.

AND THE SIX MAHARATHIS PUT ABHIMANYU TO DEATH. SINCE THEN, O ARJUNA, WE HAVE BEEN STRICKEN BY GRIEF.

AH MY SON!

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"SOON HE RECOVERED. TREMBLING IN INDIGNATION, HE ANNOUNCED.

I WILL KILL JAYADRATHA TOMORROW.

ANYONE WHO DARES TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA SHALL DIE AT MY HANDS.

"AND THEN —

IF I FAIL TO KILL JAYADRATHA BY SUNDOWN TOMORROW, I WILL CONSIGN MYSELF TO FLAMES.

O KING, ANGERED BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, ARJUNA THUS TOOK THE VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN NEXT DAY.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA.

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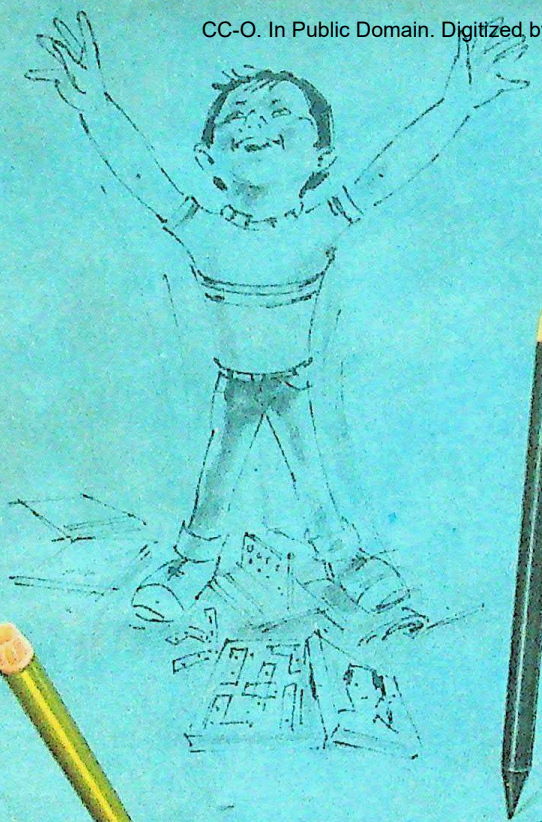

Ravi's bored of comic books,
with games and toys and catching cook
there must be something to be done
All by myself and yet have fun!

Here's my set of Ekco pens
I'll sketch my house, my school and friends
I'll colour, draw, I'll shade and trace
A big fat moustache on Daddy's face

Ekco greens, Ekco blues,
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Purple, black and violet
Pink and brown complete the set!

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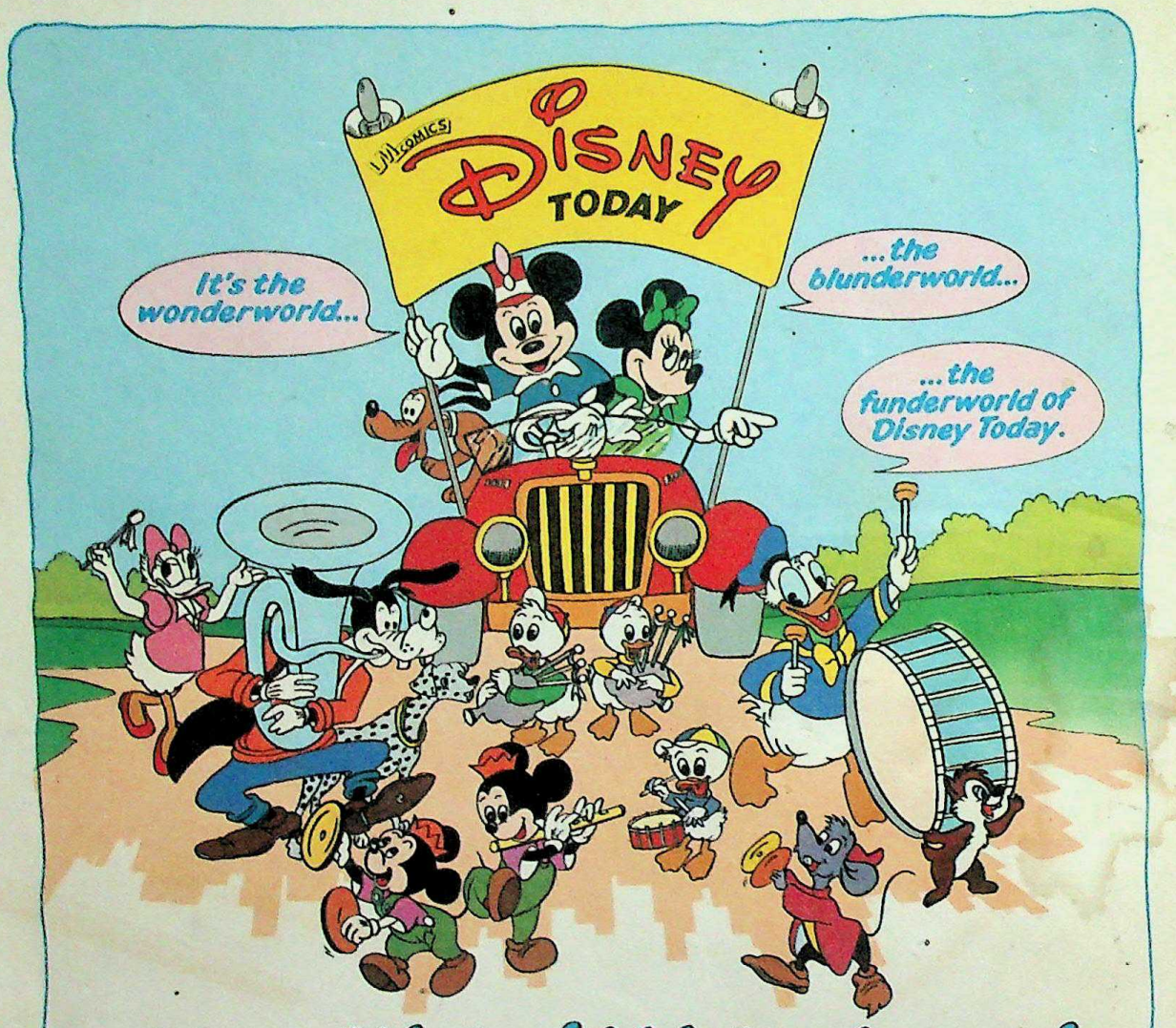

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